

D. Paul Sommerville

March 18, 2016

Investiture of Chancellor Al M. Panu, University of South Carolina - Beaufort

Congratulations to Chancellor Panu and greetings to President Pastides, The USC Board of Trustees, Representatives from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (USCB's accreditation body), faculty, students and fellow guests.

The relationship between Beaufort County and USCB has been long and deep under Chancellor Upshaw and it will get longer and deeper under Chancellor Panu.

USCB has become a powerful magnet for exactly what Beaufort County most needs—bright young minds with ideas and dreams.

Beaufort County has invested significantly in USCB's transition to a public, 4-year baccalaureate university, and we are proud of the impact USCB is making on our region and in the state:

- As an employer: Over \$74M in economic impact and 1000 jobs helping to drive our economy each year;
- As one of the largest knowledge-based businesses in our region, raising the capacity of our residents to compete for jobs and to attract firms that desire lifelong learners and problem-solvers as employees;
- By attracting exceptional faculty and staff who contribute to our communities—as researchers in critical areas like water quality, coastal ecology and computational science;

- By educating local students and giving them paths to become more highly skilled professionals, such as nurses, educators, human service professionals, business and hospitality managers;
- By developing our future leaders to become thoughtful, civic-minded, reflective individuals who contribute to our communities through service work and internships; and
- By attracting bright and eager students from across our state and beyond.

We are also delighted with the strong, vibrant 4-year baccalaureate university that USCB has become, reducing the “brain drain” of local students who have historically left our region never to return.

Chancellor Panu, we challenge you to lead USCB to become a university rooted even more deeply in the Lowcountry and to raise even further the visibility and recognition of Beaufort County’s unique assets.

We challenge you to continue to grow enrollment and to raise the level of educational attainment in our region.

We challenge you to expand even further, existing academic programs, and to bring masters level programming in key areas that will benefit our region, such as the visual arts, education, health care, business, environmental studies, and computational science.

Chancellor Panu, you are taking the helm of a juggernaut that has helped rocket Beaufort County and the Lowcountry into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We look forward to your leadership and vision helping to take USCB and our community to even greater heights of accomplishment and impact.

Beaufort County faces a brighter future with USCB.